

**City of Greensboro Planning Department
Zoning Staff Report and
Plan Amendment Evaluation
January 9, 2006 Public Hearing**

The information provided in this staff report has been included for the purpose of reviewing proposed zoning changes. Since the zoning process does not require a site plan, there may be additional requirements placed on the property through the Technical Review Committee process to address subdivision and development regulations.

Item: C
Location: West side of Regional Road North and north side of Airport Center Drive
between Business Park Drive and Bentley Road

Applicant: American Express Travel Related Services Company, Inc.
Owner: American Express Travel Related Services Company, Inc.

GFLUM

From: Industrial/Corporate Park
To: Mixed Use Corporate Park

Zoning

From: CP
To: CD-RM-12

Conditions:

- 1) Uses shall be limited to townhome dwellings and accessory uses.
- 2) The total number of dwelling units shall not exceed 129.
- 3) No building shall exceed two (2) stories in height as viewed from the front of the buildings.
- 4) All townhomes shall have attached garages.
- 5) All townhomes shall be designed for sale.
- 6) There shall be no trash compactor and no dumpster located on the property other than for the purpose of collection and removing construction debris.
- 7) The community will be serviced by a private solid waste hauler.
- 8) The developer will provide 5 foot sidewalks on both sides of all internal streets.

SITE INFORMATION	
Maximum Developable Units	129
Net Density	9 units per acre
Existing Land Use	Undeveloped
Acreage	14.275 acres
Physical Characteristics	<i>Topography:</i> Rolling <i>Vegetation:</i> Wooded <i>Other:</i> N/A
Overlay Districts	Portion of Site in NC 68 Scenic Corridor Overlay District
Historic District/Resources	N/A
Generalized Future Land Use	Industrial/Corporate Park
Other	N/A

SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USE		
Location	Land Use	Zoning
<i>North</i>	Undeveloped	LI
<i>South</i>	American Express	CP
<i>East</i>	The Hood Center Offices	CD-LI
<i>West</i>	Undeveloped	CP

ZONING HISTORY		
Case #	Year	Request Summary
2504	1996	This property has been zoned Corporate Park since it was annexed in 1996. Prior to annexation, it was zoned Corporate Park by Guilford County.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CP (EXISTING) AND CD-RM-12 (PROPOSED) ZONING DISTRICTS
CP: Primarily intended to accommodate office, warehouse, research and development, and assembly uses on large sites in a planned, campus-like setting compatible with adjacent residential uses. The district may also contain retail and service uses which customarily locate within planned employment centers.
CD-RM-12: Primarily intended to accommodate multifamily uses at a density of 12.0 units per acre or less. See Conditions for uses limitations and other restrictions.

TRANSPORTATION	
Street Classification	Airport Center Drive – Local Street, Regional Road – Collector.
Site Access	Exact number of driveway unknown at this time. However, one access point will be approve by GDOT on Regional Road to align opposite of Business Park Drive.
Traffic Counts	Regional Road ADT = 11,300.
Trip Generation	N/A.
Sidewalks	Sidewalks are a requirement of the Development Ordinance. 6' sidewalk with a 4' grass strip is required along both sides of thoroughfares. 5' sidewalk with a 3' grass strip is required along one side of all other street types.
Transit	No.
Traffic Impact Study	Not required per TIS Ordinance.
Street Connectivity	N/A.
Other	N/A.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW	
Water Supply Watershed	Yes, site drains to Greensboro Watershed, WS III
Floodplains	Based on preliminary flood insurance rate map (FIRM) there is a Special Flood hazard Area (SFHA) and floodway associated with the stream located along the SW corner of property (Brush Creek). Floodplain possibly located on SW portion of site. If floodplain located on site, all proposed buildings in flood plain must have the finished floor elevation at least 1' above the base flood elevation (BFE), also all the mechanical equipment must be elevated at least 1' above BFE.
Streams	Perennial stream located on NW portion of site. Perennial stream requires a 100' undisturbed buffer on each side measured from top of bank. Buffer must remain undisturbed with some exemptions. No BUA allowed in buffer.
Other	Maximum built upon area allowed is 70% of the site acreage. All existing and proposed built upon area must drain and be treated by a state approved BMP device (pond or similar). For low density development 24% is the maximum built upon area allowed and scoresheet is required.

LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS	
Location	Required Planting Yard Type and Rate
<i>North</i>	Type D Yard - 5' avg. width; 2 understory/100', 18 shrubs/100'
<i>South</i>	Street Yard - 8' avg. width; 2 canopy/100', 4 understory/100', 17shrubs/100'
<i>East</i>	Street Yard - 8' avg. width; 2 canopy/100', 4 understory/100', 17shrubs/100'
<i>West</i>	Type D Yard - 5' avg. width; 2 understory/100', 18 shrubs/100'

CONNECTIONS 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

Connections 2025 Written Policies:

Growth at the Fringe Goal: Provide a development framework for the fringe that guides sound, sustainable patterns of land use, limits sprawl, protects rural character, evidences sound stewardship of the environment, and provides for efficient provision of public services and facilities as the City expands. Development will increase density and mix land uses at a pedestrian scale with sidewalks, bikeways, and where possible, public transit.

POLICY 4G.1: Promote compact development.

Housing and Neighborhoods Goal: Meet the needs of present and future Greensboro citizens for a choice of decent, affordable housing in stable, livable neighborhoods that offer security, quality of life, and the necessary array of services and facilities.

POLICY 6C: Promote the diversification of new housing stock to meet the needs of all citizens for suitable, affordable housing.

POLICY 7C: Ensure that city land use policies and regulations allow for an *adequate supply of land to accommodate economic development*.

POLICY 7C.3: Identify brownfield sites and *underutilized/abandoned properties* and buildings and expedite opportunities for development.

Connections 2025 Map Policies:

The area requested for rezoning lies within the following map classifications:

Existing:

Industrial/Corporate Park: This designation applies to areas where present or anticipated uses include both light and heavy industrial uses, such as manufacturing, assembly, and fabrication; wholesaling and distribution; and corporate office and technology parks, which may be introduced to replace older heavy industrial uses. Although new residential development is discouraged in areas designated for this land use category, pre-existing residential uses may be present in or adjacent to these areas. As established industrial areas redevelop, such residential, institutional, or similar uses should be protected from adverse impacts (heavy truck traffic, significant outside storage, factors such as noise, dust, and glare, etc.) through performance-based standards, buffers, and proper separation from noxious uses.

Proposed:

Mixed Use Corporate Park: This designation is intended for large tracts of undeveloped land near the City's fringe that are appropriate for well planned, larger scale business/employment parks with supporting uses such as retail, hotels, and residential. Primary uses such as office, flex office, technology research and development, light manufacturing, distribution, and assembly should be placed in a campus-like or "corporate park" setting with generous, linked open space to maximize value and to promote visual quality and compatibility with the surrounding area. Pedestrian-friendly features such as buildings placed near the street, sidewalks, and trails leading to nearby uses such as retail and housing should be encouraged.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT HISTORY		
Case #	Date	Request Summary
N/A		There have not been any land use amendments in the immediate vicinity of this case.

APPLICANT STATED REASONS FOR REQUEST

Explain in detail why the change is needed and a justification for such a change:

“American Express Travel Related Services owns a large parcel of land, of which the subject property forms a part. The company has elected to sell the subject property (14.275 acres) to Portrait Homes for the construction of townhomes for sale to the public. There are no other townhomes within several miles of the site, and with a large corporate population as well as the proposed Federal Express mid Atlantic Sorting Hub, these homes will provide affordable housing for those interested in residing in this neighborhood.”

Explain in detail the conditions that you think may warrant a Plan Amendment (i.e. unforeseen circumstances or the emergence of new information, unanticipated changes in development pattern, rezonings, transportation improvements, economic opportunities, changes in socioeconomic conditions, etc.):

“The area in which the subject property is located (Airport) does not have an abundance of homes for sale to the public. With American Express, Federal Express and Dell computers all within minutes from the site, these homes will provide housing for the employees of those companies. The economic patterns have changed as a result of this rapid industrial growth, but the availability of homes has not kept pace with that growth. The construction of a third runway, the relocation of Bryan Boulevard, and other proposed road improvements indicate further rapid growth in the airport area; however, there are few, if any, available townhomes for sale to the general public in the vicinity.”

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Need for the Proposed Change: The applicant is requesting this change to build townhomes. This area is currently depicted as Industrial/Corporate Park on the Generalized Future Land Use map which applies to areas where present or anticipated uses include both light and heavy industrial uses, such as manufacturing, assembly, and fabrication; wholesaling and distribution; and corporate office and technology parks, which may be introduced to replace older heavy industrial uses. The applicant has requested a change to Mixed Use Corporate Park which is intended for large tracts of undeveloped land near the City’s fringe that are appropriate for well planned, larger scale business/employment parks with supporting uses such as retail, hotels, and residential. North and west of the site are undeveloped tracts, east are office buildings in Airport Center Business Park, and south is American Express.

This area is in the vicinity of the airport and is characterized primarily by office, industrial, and warehouse uses. There are also large tracts of undeveloped land.

This request is supported by the Housing and Neighborhoods goal and the Growth at the Fringe goal, but it can also be considered in conflict with the Economic Development goal and Policy 7C which calls for an *adequate supply of land to accommodate economic development*.

Effect of the proposed Change on the Need for City Services and Facilities (e.g. roadway level of service, traffic counts, planned road improvements, transit, accidents statistics, and environmental constraints such as; location within a Water Supply Watershed, floodplain, streams):

Water Resources: The site may have wetlands. If any disturbance to wetlands is proposed and/or any stream crossing / disturbance is proposed permits will have to be obtained from the state and corps of engineers prior to construction.

An appropriately sized drainage easement is required on all channels carrying public runoff (size depends on amount of flow channel carries).

Implications, if any, the Amendment may have for Other Parts of the Plan:

This request may encourage other residential developments to occur in an area that has been earmarked as a nonresidential support area for the airport.

If approved, this may trigger a staff evaluation of the Industrial/Corporate Park land use classification in the immediate vicinity of this site.

Unforeseen Circumstances or the Emergence of New Information (e.g. significant economic opportunity in Tier 2 or 3): The desire of American Express to sell off their land for residential use.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MONITORING COMMENTS

The Monitoring Committee met on December 5, 2005, and made the following comments concerning this request:

- This request does not look right on the map;
- It is close to jobs;
- Not much residential in this area;
- Concerned about residential in this area for the protection of the residences against Industrial uses, especially the Light Industrial (LI) zoning to the north;
- The users to the south are appropriate users; and
- They should provide a wider buffer to the north to buffer against future LI uses.

CONFORMITY WITH OTHER PLANS

The following aspects of relevant plans may be applicable in this case:

City Plans: The Airport Area Plan shows this property to be located in an area classified as Non-Residential. This is a broad category that includes both light and heavy industrial uses, offices, warehouses, service-oriented commercial activities and other types of development that are not noise sensitive. Although close, this property is just outside and north of the 60 DNL Noise Contour.

Other Plans: N/A

STAFF COMMENTS

Planning: The applicant has indicated that a condition will be added at the public hearing which would provide for a substantial landscape buffer along the northern property line. The provision of this buffer should help separate residential development on the subject property from potentially incompatible industrial development on the vacant tract to the north.

GDOT: No additional comments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on all the information contained in this report, the Planning Department recommends approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Mixed Use Corporate Park land use classification and approval of the rezoning to Conditional District – RM-12 Residential Multifamily primarily due to:

- Providing a mix of land uses within the corporate area;
- Providing housing close to jobs; and
- Promoting compact development.